



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

For IMMEDIATE Release

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### PROPOSED FRAMEWORKS FOR EARLY MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING SEASONS

Regulations setting the frameworks for 1982-83 early migratory bird hunting seasons have been proposed by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Generally the early season frameworks are the same as last year except for a few changes that will be subsequently described. Early hunting seasons are those that open before October 1.

The proposals, published in the Federal Register on July 12, 1982, set forth the species to be hunted during early seasons, daily bag and possession limits, shooting hours, season lengths, earliest opening and latest closing season dates, and hunting areas. When these frameworks are finalized, State conservation agencies may select local hunting season dates and options.

Species included in the early season proposals are mourning doves, white-winged doves, band-tailed pigeons, rails, woodcock, common snipe, and gallinules; teal in portions of the Mississippi and Central Flyways during September; sea ducks in designated areas of the Atlantic Flyway; experimental duck seasons in Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, and Tennessee in September; and sandhill cranes in portions of the Central and Pacific Flyways. The proposal includes an option for a falconry season in certain States meeting Federal falconry standards.

Changes being proposed for this group of birds include a basic nationwide mourning dove season framework of 70 days with 12 birds daily and 24 in possession, with an option for a 45-day season with limits of 15 and 30, respectively. In south Texas, a 4-day white-winged dove season is contemplated. In Florida, 4 white-winged doves may be taken during the mourning dove season as part of the regular bag limit. A breeding white-winged dove population has developed in Florida from birds that escaped from a propagator several years ago.

The annual singing ground survey of breeding woodcock indicated a 20 percent decline from 1981 in the Eastern Region. Blame has been placed on a severe April blizzard and lingering snow cover that is believed to have killed many breeding birds. Thus, a delay until October 5 is proposed for opening the woodcock season in Atlantic Flyway States.

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Numerous changes are proposed in the sandhill crane frameworks for portions of the Central Flyway in terms of hunting areas, season frameworks, and season lengths. These extensions, based on increased crane numbers and improved information on crane biology, migration, and habitat use, implement some of the objectives of the Mid-Continent Sandhill Crane Management Plan.

Two experimental seasons are proposed for sandhill cranes in southwestern New Mexico, and sandhill cranes and Canada geese in portions of Lincoln County, Wyoming, both to reduce local populations and alleviate crop depredations.

Comments on early season proposals will be accepted through July 16, 1982, and should be addressed to the Director (MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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